

Dear Members of Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Maribel Gutierrez. I am a domestic worker and I live in Waterbury, Connecticut. I am a leader in the Naugatuck Valley Project and Recovery for All. I support Senate Bill No. 1178: An Act Expanding Connecticut Paid Sick Days.

About 38 years ago, I was working as a personal care attendant for an elderly woman living with her family. The lady she was taking care of became hostile and hyper when her attendant wore gloves. Her daughter told me that I had to take care of her mother without putting on gloves or else the family would let me go. I needed the job. I was supporting my mother by myself. About one month after beginning the job, I got sick. I went to my doctor who told me I had stomach bacteria. I got even sicker after that and had to be hospitalized for one month. Obviously, I did not have sick days so I made no money for over a month. Ironically, I lost my job anyway.

I am here today to tell you, honorable representatives and senators, that paid sick days are important. Not only are they important for the worker who gets sick, but they are also important for a sick worker's family, especially their children and elderly family members who depend on their earnings to provide for the entire family.

We ask that you change workers' eligibility for sick days from 680 hours to the very first day on the job. I do not think workers will abuse this change.

I strongly support the expansion of paid sick days in our state. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote favorably this year to strengthen Connecticut's paid sick leave law.

Thank you for your time,

Maribel Gutierrez

359 Chase Parkway

Waterbury, CT 06708